

RESPONSES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO QUESTIONS ASKED  
ABOUT THE SHEEHAN ARTICLE IN FOREIGN POLICY

The Department of State wishes to make the following replies to questions it has received concerning the article by Mr. Edward R.F. Sheehan, entitled "Step by Step in the Middle East" which is to appear in the periodical Foreign Policy and which that periodical has released to the press.

The forward to the Foreign Policy article states that the conversations quoted in Mr. Sheehan's article are verbatim. Was Mr. Sheehan shown transcripts or memoranda of conversation?

We understand that Mr. Sheehan spent a year on this project talking to over 60 sources on three continents. According to the magazine itself, the author's conversations included a long trip to the area, and talks with leading Arab and Israeli officials. People in the State Department also talked to him on a background basis. In his contacts here, Mr. Sheehan did not see any transcripts, memoranda, or official records, and he was not authorized to quote directly anything told him here. So far as the Department is concerned, the use of the term "verbatim" to describe the conversations quoted is inaccurate.

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Are the quotes and the information conveyed in them accurate?

So far as the Department of State is concerned, it is inaccurate to describe the conversations and quotations as verbatim. We cannot speak for others to whom he talked. Insofar as Mr. Sheehan was briefed on the basis of any of our records of conversations, this represented a gross violation of confidence and was not authorized by the Secretary. As to the style and technique chosen by the author in writing his article, that is not for us to explain. The Secretary has said many times, in many other cases, that we respect the confidentiality of diplomatic conversations. The conduct of our diplomacy depends upon others having confidence that what they say to us will remain private. That remains our firm policy. So we are not going to get into a discussion of the substance of that article.

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What about Mr. Sheehan's accounts of Presidential conversations that the United States is committed to the pre-June 1967 borders?

The Department is not going to comment on alleged conversations between the President and other leaders. American policy on the question of final boundaries in the Middle East remains what has been stated so many times: We support United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967 which sets out the elements to be included in a peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That resolution combines Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories, with acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area within secure and recognized boundaries in the context of peace. We have repeatedly said, and repeat once again, that it is for the parties themselves to work out implementation of this Resolution — including their negotiation of the final boundaries between them. It is not for the United States to present a blueprint for a final settlement or to draw boundaries. As we have said, under Resolution 242, it is for the parties themselves to negotiate those boundaries.

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